

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

Universal National Service

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ABSTRACT

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As America begins the 21st century, it faces many challenges from the War on Terrorism to Homeland Defense to a potential war with Iraq. These challenges are spurring debate in American on the need for universal national service. This debate is not new; since the days of George Washington many American leaders have believed universal service was vital to the nature of our country. This paper will argue for the reinstatement of a national service program which will funnel individuals either into the military or into a national service corps that involves either working in their local community or performing critical tasks associated with the recently created Homeland Defense department. To support this argument the paper will provide background on the challenges the military faces in manning and sustaining the all volunteer force and the resulting growing gap between the military culture and civilian population. The paper will also point out that by not having every socioeconomic class serving in the military, America's ability to sustain military operations even if the nation's national interests are at stake, maybe at risk. In addition, the paper will identify key characteristics of a 21st century national draft and national service program. The conclusion will illustrate that revising a universal service program will allow a new generation of Americans to serve their country either in the military or in a national service corps. More importantly, universal service will restore a sense of national purpose and patriotism to a new generation of Americans.

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UNIVERSAL NATIONAL SERVICE

The 21st century has brought on many new challenges to America that both its citizens and military must face together in order for America to remain the beacon of freedom and democracy. These challenges crystallized last September 2001 after the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington D.C which initiated a global war on terrorism and the development of the Homeland Security department. The U.S. military is prosecuting the war on terrorism and will play a major role in the newly formed Homeland Security department. These two initiatives along with the potential war in Iraq are causing the military to stretch its resources very thin. Moreover, America is fighting a global war for the first time without any conscription system even though the level of patriotic fervor among American civilians has reached levels once thought impossible in post Vietnam America.¹ Though this fervor may be high, by and large, it has been restricted to rhetoric and flag waving and has not transcended into an upsurge of military enlistments or people volunteering to perform critical jobs needed against the war on terrorism in the United States.

Once again debate is growing around the question of whether a national service program should be enacted to ensure all Americans, from every socioeconomic class, rich and poor alike have a personal stake in defending the nation. This debate is not new; since the days of George Washington many American leaders have believed universal service was vital to the nature of our country.² Today there is growing concern among political pundits and historians that the ethos of shared sacrifice among the American people is missing especially from the so called "Elite Class." According to historian Allan Millet, "The most privileged and educated in American society now don't regard military service as something honorable or useful. It would interrupt their career paths."³ This paper will argue for the reinstatement of a national service program which will funnel individuals either into the military or into a national service corps that involves either working in their local community or performing critical tasks associated with the recently created Homeland Defense department. To support this argument the paper will provide background on the challenges the military faces in manning and sustaining the all volunteer force and the resulting growing gap between the military culture and civilian population. The paper will also point out that by not having every socioeconomic class serving in the military, America's ability to sustain military operations even if the nation's national interests are at stake, maybe at risk. In addition, the paper will identify key characteristics of a 21st century national draft and national service program. The conclusion will illustrate that revising a universal service program will allow a new generation of Americans to serve their

country either in the military or in a national service corps. More importantly, universal service will restore a sense of national purpose and patriotism to a new generation of Americans.

BACKGROUND:

The United States replaced the Selective Service program in 1973 and with the “All Volunteer Force” which will celebrate its 30th birthday in 2003. One of the major causes of the draft’s demise came about as the Viet Nam war persisted and more and more young men from middle to upper class families used college deferments to avoid serving in the military. These massive college deferments compromised the principle of national service and caused the draft to be perceived as class bias which divided the country and led to its termination.⁴ Historically the draft did not always have this class bias label. The 1940s and 1950s drafts, which allowed the “Greatest Generation” to serve its country, ensured all young adults committed two years to the military and did not allow exemptions to the wealthy or well connected.⁵ Moreover, three of four high school graduates and three out of four college graduates served in the military and many of the college graduates served in the enlisted ranks.⁶ Even though many Americans celebrated the end of the draft, it did provide a common bond by bringing Americans from different regions and socio-economic backgrounds together for one purpose - serving their country.

After the draft ended the military began the all volunteer force, requiring the services, Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and Air Force to recruit many young people each year to meet critical shortfalls in specific military occupation specialties. Each service devised specific inducements such as enlistment bonuses and college tuition assistance along with different enlistment periods ranging from two to six years. Many of the supporters for the all-volunteer force initiative conceived of it originally as a peacetime force exclusively and presumed any major military engagement would signal the resumption of the military draft.⁷ Throughout the past couple of decades the all-volunteer force has gone through a number of peaks and valleys with respect to recruiting and retention. For example, during the late 1990s recruitment shortfalls began for all the services except the Marine Corps. Even though all the services met the recruiting goals for 2001, the quality of recruits has been questioned. Specifically, in 1999 the Air Force was short 1,400 active duty pilots and the Navy was short 21,000 sailors.⁸ “The number of enlistees scoring in the top half of the armed-forces qualification tests has fallen by a third since the mid 1990s.”⁹ Since meeting its manning requirements is critical and the military has a limited recruiting budget, the services have focused their efforts on specific geographical regions. Since 1973 the southern region has

continually increased the number of recruits volunteering to serve in the military and by the year 2000 that contribution comprised 40 percent. The northeastern region's contributions have steadily declined to a low of 14 percent during the same timeframe. The West and Midwest regions have remained steady in the range between 18 to 22 percent over the same time period.¹⁰ Assuming this trend continues over the next 10-20 years the vast majority of America's all volunteer force will come from the south while a very small percentage will come from the northeast. The military will be reflective of only one major region of the country – the south.

Since the attacks on the World Trade Centers, the military has activated more than 130,000 reservists with many of them now in their second year of service due to a lack of additional reservists to replace them.¹¹ This is just one example of the military's resources being stretched too thinly due to lack of personnel. A major reason for calling these reservists to serve is that they fill critical military occupation specialties that the active force can not routinely fill, such as military police, pilots, mechanics and intelligence officers. This reliance is even more critical as the military prepares war plans against Iraq, which used chemical weapons against Iran and its own people during the 1980s. The reserves will play a critical role in combating this threat since "100 percent of the Army's water supply battalions and 100 percent of its chemical brigades are in the reserve arm."¹² Another consequence of calling up these reservists is that many are police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians who fill critical jobs that cities need to guard against future terrorist attacks. This void is felt even more in small towns such as Ashland, Alabama where the mayor may be called to active duty along with police officers and other key officials who are essential in the day to day operations of the town.¹³ It is clear that on the homeland security front thousands of people will be needed to deal with the terrorist threat both wearing a military uniform and performing critical civic duties.

A telling demographic of today's society is that only 6% of Americans under 65 have served in the military.¹⁴ This void of service will only make the challenges of this century more difficult as several generations of Americans may not have a sense of obligation to their nation. Without this sense of obligation a functioning democracy may be in peril. If citizens do not understand the importance of duty and the price of American democracy then a complacency may set in. This is not a new phenomenon as Theodore Roosevelt talked of this peril back in 1916 fearing that the different classes would grow estranged from each other as the country prospered.¹⁵ Since fewer and fewer Americans are serving in the military then the number of Americans who know someone in the military is also on a steady decline. Many Americans do

not have the appreciation of the sacrifices and contributions that their fellow citizens are making by serving in the military. As less Americans know someone in the military a smaller number of families are promoting military service to their children.

Recruiting and maintaining the All Volunteer Force has not come without a price. The cost of recruiting soldiers today is \$11,568 while a private, 1st class earns \$14,568 per year.¹⁶ Moreover, the defense department spent 270 million dollars in 2001 on recruitment advertising.¹⁷ These costs will continue to increase due to the shrinking population of eligible young men and women between the ages of 18 and 25. The military faces stiff competition in attracting these young people because they will be weighing their different options from enlisting or attending college, to entering the private sector, to the potential of earning more money versus enlisting for 3 to 6 years. The military has spent millions of dollars on recruiting, yet the services frequently fail to meet their recruiting goals. During the late 1990s none of the services, except for the Marine Corps, met their recruitment goals. When services did meet their goals the quality of recruit was questioned by falling test scores of almost a third of the military enlistees since the mid 90s.¹⁸ A more startling trend is that over a third of new military members currently fail to complete their enlistments while during the Viet Nam draft only one in ten draftees failed to meet their two year obligation.¹⁹ To ensure recruits test scores rise and they fulfill their service obligation services must do a better job recruiting people with the right qualifications. One of the least costly ways to recruit and ensure the military enlists highly committed people is utilizing a credible veteran with a positive military experience to convince young people to join the military. Unfortunately, that resource is gradually being depleted since the draft has been gone for over thirty years and a preponderance of people joining the military come from specific geographical regions. The military will continue to face recruiting challenges since an increasing number of young people are showing little interest in volunteering to serve their country.

MILITARY –CIVILIAN GAP

Senator McCain stated that “when only certain Americans serve in the military, I am worried about two different cultures arising in American society.”²⁰ This cultural divide may lead to the American people not understanding the military mission and a military culture that scorns the values and priorities of civilian life.²¹ What are the causes for this gap? First the abolishment of the draft in the 1970s resulted in fewer American people being exposed to military life. Second, a smaller number of America’s elected officials served in the military. As the military prosecutes the global war on terrorism not one of the 435 members of the U.S

House of Representatives has a son or daughter on active duty in the enlisted ranks of this nation's military.²² Senator Tim Johnson, whose son is Sergeant Brooks Johnson, is the only member of Congress who has an enlisted soldier on active duty.²³

The question must be asked does the gap matter? A recent study by the Triangle Institute for Security Studies concluded that the gap is real and has undermined the cooperation between the military and civilian sectors.²⁴ Their analysis showed that the military people expressed pessimism about the moral health of civilian society and that the military could help society become more moral, and that civilian society would be better off if it adopted more of the military's values and behaviors.²⁵ Since fewer members of Congress have military experience their ability to understand military affairs and provide the proper legislation that enhances the ability of the military to conduct its primary mission of winning the nation's wars may be negatively impacted. Moreover, as Congress debates future conflicts that may send the military in harms way they may not have as personal a stake in the decision as in years gone by with virtually no sons or daughters in the service and fewer constituents affected by their vote. In previous conflicts, the government asked for personal sacrifice that involved serving in the military and rationing of specific precious products such as gasoline. Yet today, America's leaders do not call for personal sacrifice which may be a result of the lack of a personal human dimension to these conflicts.²⁶

Recent surveys indicate, even after the tragedy of September 11th, that less than 50 percent of Americans want their children to serve in the military.²⁷ A more startling poll showed that 37 percent of college students would attempt to evade the draft if reinstated and 21 percent would only serve stateside.²⁸ What is contributing to this trend is the fact that a smaller percentage of Americans are connected to people who are either serving in the military today or have served in the past. That connection was more prevalent twenty to thirty years ago due to the World War II generation, but as more World War II veterans pass away that gap grows wider and wider between the American people and its military. As a result, the behaviors and norms of the military and the civilian population continue to diverge and a gap of understanding continues to grow.

The gap is also seen in the growing partisanship of military officers. Over the last generation the number of officers who describe themselves as Republican has nearly doubled from 33 to 64 percent.²⁹ More significant is the fact that eight times as many military officers identify themselves Republicans than as Democrats, while the American public is evenly split between these two parties.³⁰ One reason for this trend is that more and more officers come

from predominately one region in the country – the South. Over the past generation the South has become republicanized.³¹ With more military officers aligning themselves with the Republican Party, there is now a perception that Republican administrations are more pro-military and have a better understanding of national defense than a Democratic administration. Two recent incidents highlight this perception. First, occurred during the recent presidential election of 2000, when some military personnel accused the Gore campaign of trying to discount late-arriving military absentee ballots from overseas because they were presumed to be Republican votes. The other incident was the comparison of the Bush administration handling of the war on terrorism versus the bungled attempt to take out Osama bin Laden in 1998.³² These events only highlight the fact the military's allegiance will remain and may continue to grow heavily towards the Republican Party, which cannot be healthy for a democratic society.

During the past decade many public officials and academics have stated that throughout American history there has always been a cultural gap between the military and civilian people and that this is not a problem. Yet today's gap is different, real, and is reflected in examples of significant lack of harmony between the military and its civilian leadership. There have been recent examples where the senior military leadership has been emboldened to offer its frank views on when and where to use military forces. During the recent Kosovo war, sources of the Joint Staff leaked the military's opposition to the press by stating there had not been a compelling argument made that this war is in our national interest.³³ The military does not decide what is in the national interest, the civilian leadership has that responsibility. Today a growing number of military officers state they should have a larger role in recommending specific courses of action and developing exit strategy than their historical roles of providing advice to the civilian leadership.³⁴ This example points to the larger problem of the developing mistrust between the military and its civilian decision makers.

A recent book by Frank Schaeffer, "Keeping Faith: A Father-Son Story About Love and the United States Marine Corps" captures this expanding gap between the military and American society and the ignorance of some Americans about certain facets of military life. Mr. Schaeffer's son joined the Marines, yet his demographics are rare, a northeastern from an upper middle class family. When his son's classmates and parents learned that he had enlisted many were shocked and amazed. They made comments such as "the Marines are terribly southern" and "your son was such a good student what a waste." One parent made the observation that the family should "carefully evaluate what went wrong."³⁵ At his son's graduation from Marine boot camp, Mr. Schaeffer realized that the parents and friends attending

graduation reflected America: African American, Hispanic, and Asian. This group was not represented at his son's high school graduation. Mr. Schaeffer points out that he now feels more connected to America and observes that the well educated have gotten used to having somebody else defend us. He asks about the future of America's democracy "when the sons and daughters of the janitors at our elite universities are far more likely to be put in harm's way than are any of the students whose dorms their parents clean?"³⁶

NATIONAL DRAFT

President Bush has stated that the global war on terrorism will be a different kind of conflict. This conflict is different due to the nature of the enemy and the fact that this war will take years to prosecute and that all Americans are needed in this fight. Since the end of the Cold War almost a third of military personnel have been cut, resulting in the military calling up thousands of reservists to fight this conflict. It is clear that thousands more men and women will be needed in uniform to either serve in the military or perform jobs in the Homeland Security department to fight terrorism both here and abroad. Some of the jobs where more people will be needed are airport security, guarding dams and nuclear power plants, sports complexes, U.S. embassies, border patrol, air marshals to ride on passenger planes, and more FBI agents to uncover terrorist cells either operating in or outside America's borders.³⁷ To meet these on going personnel demands some sort of national draft must be initiated.

This draft will not resemble the class- biased draft of the Viet Nam era, allowing many teenagers to either dodge or use college enrollment as a means to avoid serving in the armed services. First, all Americans from ages 18-24 regardless of education or social position would serve and their enlistment would be for 24 months. Before the Viet Nam era draft this class bias was not a concern during the 1950s. Even though nuclear destruction hung in the air as the Cold War began, almost all Ivy League men served and worked and lived with others from very different backgrounds and races. Second, draftees would have a choice of either serving in the military, homeland security, or some type of national service program. Third, as conscripts entered the service they would receive some type of government financial assistance to use after their service to help offset the costs of higher education. Fourth, since this is a new kind of war, this draft would focus less on preparing men and women for conventional combat, but train them on guarding and responding to terrorism at home.³⁸ The most important impact of this draft would be the restoration of the citizen soldier which has had such a dominant role throughout America's history.

Many opponents of a draft argue that today's military uses high tech weaponry and employs complex warfighting strategies, requiring professional soldiers, not short term draftees. That argument may be true, however, there are thousands of jobs that could be filled by draftees. Remember also that during World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam most soldiers only received six months of training before being sent to war.³⁹ Peacekeeping in places such as Bosnia or Kosovo are consuming vital military resources where thousands of soldiers are deployed on average of six months. Infantry and armor battalions typically fulfill this mission. These combat troops and their commanders tend to chafe at these peacekeeping missions because they dull their warfighting skills since they are unable to train with their weapons.⁴⁰ The military police thrive in these operations which do not require many specialized skills. A draftee could easily be trained in 4-6 months and then deployed to one of the many peacekeeping missions the military is performing today. Having the draftees performing these types of missions would allow the military to free up these combat units to fight the war on terrorism without abandoning other U.S. commitments. This proposal is not new, Israel and other countries use their conscripts for homeland security.⁴¹ The draft would also allow the military to concentrate limited dollars to recruit and retain volunteers in those highly competitive specialties such as computer science and engineering. In this scenario the military can focus bonuses and pay raises on the career force and not on the draftees. Even though there would be two pay scales the draftees would receive educational benefits that would offset the different pay structures. This idea is no different than in today's military where certain military officers, for example aviators and doctors, receive incentive pay or bonuses to stay in the military while the majority of officers do not receive any additional money for serving their country.

One of the consequences of not having a military draft is that the military has had to overpay recruits in order to entice them to volunteer resulting in less resources for sergeants and career enlisted. During the draft era the pay ratio between master sergeant and private was seven to one; today it is less than three to one.⁴² The military must retain its sergeants who are critical to the training of America's military's force. Another benefit to reinstating the draft is that it provides the American taxpayer a better return on his or her investment. Presently, the government doles out over \$30 billion to students to help pay for their college tuition, without any strings attached or service requirement.⁴³ The government should only provide college aid for those individuals who either served in the military or worked in a civilian service program. This federal student aid may have also worked against the military in recruiting young people who previously might have looked at volunteering for the military as a means to help pay for college education by receiving enlistment bonuses. With a national draft these young people

will contribute to either the military or their local communities in fighting the global war on terrorism and earn federal money for student aid in the process.

This draft proposal of a two year enlistment to include an overseas peacekeeping mission is not pie in the sky. In fact, a study conducted at Northwestern university asked undergraduate students about their willingness to serve in the military. The initial responses were not very positive until a professor who had served in the military in the 1950s as a draftee told them about his experiences. After his discussion the students retook the survey and there was two fold increase of students interested in enlisting for two years and serving as part of a peacekeeping force. What turned the students around was having the opportunity to serve overseas and having a friend, in this case the professor, or relative who had a favorable military experience.⁴⁴ If Northwestern students' responses are typical with other colleges than it is clear that college students would be willing to serve and more importantly, students from elite colleges who become America's future leaders in politics, business, and academia would have a better understanding of how the armed services work.⁴⁵

Reinstituting the draft would also send a powerful message to America's adversaries about the country's willingness to pay the price for freedom.⁴⁶ That price would transcend to all economic and political classes and, as previous American generations heard the call and made the sacrifice to serve their country, so should every future generation. The "greatest generation" who won World War II did not fight as individuals, but fought as Americans who understood their duties to keep America free. Even though patriotism can be seen throughout America by flag waving and gestures the preservation of liberty requires more than gestures.⁴⁷

WHO IS WILLING TO DIE

America's resolve to wage war is linked closely to both America's political leadership and the American people's willingness to accept casualties on the battlefield. Toward the end of the Viet Nam era the American people began to rise up in protest against the war impact because of the high number of people dying. One of the reasons for the declining support was the belief that a greater number of America's privileged class were evading the draft, resulting in proportionally higher casualties among Americas less privileged classes.⁴⁸ During the 1990s, America's tolerance for military casualties further declined as was evident during the Somalia firefight in 1993 where 18 American soldiers died in Mogadishu resulting in the total evacuation of American soldiers from Somalia. More recently, during the attack against the Taliban and al Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan fear of casualties has hampered some missions from being approved by senior U.S commanders.⁴⁹ Why the change? One school of thought is that the

success of the Gulf War campaign where the U.S. suffered only 148 combat casualties and more recently the Kosovo engagement, where American forces had no casualties, has established a false expectation for combat. Another point of view is that the American people will only tolerate high casualties if America's national interests are perceived to be at stake. According to Dr Charles Moskos, military sociologist from Northwestern University, both those arguments miss the mark. Instead the question should not be what are the national interests, but who is willing to die for the cause. Dr Moskos goes on to state that when America's elite youth are serving in the military then war losses become more acceptable.⁵⁰ The only way to ensure America's privileged class serves in the military is by reinstating the draft or providing some incentive for them to serve. Based on the recruitment experience of the last three decades it is clear that this group will not volunteer for military service. Both World War II and the less popular Korean War, which had high American casualties, demonstrated America's potential for commitment and resolve when all classes were serving side by side in the conflicts because of the government's national draft. Moskos concludes that America's citizens accept hardships only when their leadership is viewed as self-sacrificing.⁵¹

The concern over who will be making the sacrifices and whose lives will be at stake is also visible in today's debate on the potential war with Iraq. Only one Congressperson today has a son or daughter serving in the enlisted ranks; with their "loved ones" safely out of harm's way these elected officials do not have a personal stake in this debate. This also points out the clear gulf between the people in power and the people who will be in peril if America goes to war. Mark Shields, noted columnist and former military veteran, captured this disconnect by stating "no one at any Washington dinner party tonight – liberal or conservative, Bush appointee or Clinton holdover – personally knows any enlisted man or woman now defending the nation."⁵² As a result, the willingness of the American people to support a potential American Iraqi war may be tenuous if America suffers heavy casualties. Not only will this lack of support have a negative impact on the war with Iraq, but may also have devastating political implications to the Bush administration's campaign against terrorism. President Bush has stated often that this new war will take years to conduct and that Americans will die, so having the support of the American people behind this war is essential for it to be successful. In addition, if the terrorists perceive that when America suffers heavy military or civilian casualties that the will of American people to wage war begins to wane then this will only embolden terrorists to conduct future attacks. Until all citizens equally bear the burden of defending American freedom and more importantly, are called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice, America's ability to sustain combat operations will be in question even if the nation's interests are at stake.

CITIZEN SOLDIER

Even though many Americans celebrated the end of the draft the repercussions of that event reverberate far beyond the cultural divide between the military and American society. Noted author and historian, Steven Ambrose, captured this effect by stating “my greatest fear about today’s young people is that they grow up to adulthood without the sense of a common past or a common experience.”⁵³ That common bond Mr. Ambrose refers to is the military service which brought many Americans together from different cultures and different regions of the country. The draft caused lumberjacks from Oregon to sleep in bunks next to fisherman from Louisiana, and African Americans to live with Italian Americans. These bonding experiences brought Americans closer together and provided a common patriotism and language that smoothed over differences. Without the draft, many Cajuns from the Gulf coast would never meet a black person from Chicago, nor would kids from the ghetto ever get to know white kids from the middle suburbs.⁵⁴ Instead of having a common bond of serving their country many young people today demand entitlements that they claim due to their race or gender. This trend points to the fact that the draft provides a clear, societal definition of citizenship. Though many draftees have said they were irritated about being drafted, they still look back on their experiences favorably because of the broadening of understanding they gained by serving their country.⁵⁵ Former President Nixon said it best, that America needs all its teenagers to serve their country in some capacity.⁵⁶ That idea is prevalent today as President Bush is asking all Americans to give 4,000 hours – equivalent to two years – of service to their nation over their life time.⁵⁷ The Bush administration aim is to reconnect Americans to their country, providing that common bond among Americans.

Not only is the president trying to re-instill the citizen soldier, but there is also new legislation co-sponsored by Representative Charles Rangel, democrat from New York, and Senator Ernest Hollings, democrat from South Carolina that will be introduced in the 108th Congress. This legislation is seeking to reinstate national service by making the case, “that all who benefit from our society must share the burden of defending it.”⁵⁸ Both Congressmen make the point that the country is facing multiple challenges. The American military needs citizen soldiers to meet these requirements. Even though Representative Rangel and Senator Hollings are from the same political party their political beliefs are quite divergent. Last fall one voted to support the resolution supporting the President to take action in Iraq while the other one did not. Yet, they both recognized the need to reinvigorate into American society the concept of the citizen soldier to ensure the military has sufficient resources to meet the on-going tasks, from peacekeeping, to fighting the war on terrorism, to a potential war in Iraq.⁵⁹

NATIONAL SERVICE

In concert with the draft a national service program would be initiated to instill purpose into American citizens daily lives and provide a common cause that unites all Americans. The military may not appeal to everyone nor is it suited for everyone so the national service program will be alternative to allow everyone to serve and provide numerous opportunities. Moreover, the service program would provide another valuable benefit of teaching Americans about the importance of duty, the kinship of all citizens, and the price of American democracy.⁶⁰ The service program would also demand a common sacrifice from America's citizens and instill the notion that there are greater causes than self interest. The September 11 attacks provided the impetus for many Americans to volunteer their services, however, polls show some Americans are no longer concerned with a future terrorist attack, instead worry about the economy and education.⁶¹ Even though some polls show America's attention on terrorism maybe waning there are polls demonstrating that the new generation of young people between the ages of 18-30 year olds want to help people and make a difference while serving their communities.⁶² Having a national service corps would fill that demand and would focus on filling critical jobs in the Homeland Security department or providing critical services to local communities.

The service program would be mandatory for all young people and the target age group would be from 18-24 where there are over 27 million people. The program would require two years of service. Similar to the military, recruits would train, live, and work together and then be dispatched to work with different civil authorities based on the requirements of that community.⁶³ Similar to the draft, there would be no college deferments so everyone would serve regardless of one's economic situation. These young people would bring their skills sets or develop new ones based on the needs of either the Homeland Security department or their local communities. Airport security, customs agents, border patrol, rescue workers are just some of the needed skill sets that America requires today in order to win the War on Terrorism.

Some may question whether service to homeland security involves the risk or sacrifice of service in the military and the fairness of allowing some to meet their obligations to their country in this way. It is clear that performing peacekeeping missions or the possibly of serving in a war can be very dangerous, but performing homeland security missions can also be dangerous. The September 11th attacks demonstrated that fact and moreover, Americans read in their newspapers the peril that confronts policemen, firefighters, and rescue workers daily as they perform their jobs.

Another theme of the service corps is to reconnect the citizens with the country's democratic government. This principle was argued by President Theodore Roosevelt back in

the early 1900s that America needed a universal service system. Roosevelt believed that citizenship not only involved protected privileges, but inherent with those rights came obligations.⁶⁴ At the heart of Roosevelt's beliefs was that "service inculcates democratic values in the young and instructs them in good democratic values."⁶⁵ Roosevelt also recognized that with large number of immigrants coming to America national service would assimilate these immigrants to the challenges of democracy, and would forge bonds between the classes.⁶⁶ Roosevelt's request to service was successful as thousands of young men heeded the call and upon completing their tour of duty espoused the virtues of it to their fellow citizens. Today that same call is needed. By engaging thousands of young people would reinvigorate a participatory political culture and foster a feeling of belonging within our national structure, better understand the nation's needs and gain a better understanding of how a democracy works.⁶⁷

CONCLUSION

As America continues the fight against terrorism, builds up the homeland defense department, and debates the potential Iraqi war, all Americans must have a stake in these crucial events to ensure America's democracy remains strong; the beacon of freedom for all the world to emulate. Universal service provides the mechanism to unite Americans and provide them with a sense of national purpose and common sacrifice in these challenging times and may close the gap between the military and civilian society. Every generation has confronted America's challenges by understanding the price of citizenship. Today's generation can make those same contributions by understanding the responsibility of citizenship; answering the call by serving in the military or in the national service corps. Many Americans who today take for granted their - freedom - may then have a better understanding that citizenship involves duty and responsibility and is the price Americans must pay to maintain America's democracy.

WORD COUNT =6,044

ENDNOTES

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